

[The Flood at Port Angeles]

Dup.

Folklore

Circumstances of Interview

STATE: Washington

NAME OF WORKER: Verna L. Stamolis

ADDRESS: Post Office Box 112, University Station, Seattle, Wash.

DATE: December 22, 1938

SUBJECT: Pioneers

1. Name and address of informant: Mrs. D. W. Morse,

4350 Pasadena Place

Seattle, Washington

2. Date and time of interview: December 16, 1938, 2 P.M.

3. Place of Interview: Home of informant.

4. Description of home: Two-story house, well furnished, large yard, piano, etc.

Personal History of Informant

STATE: Washington

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NAME OF WORKER: Verna L. Stamolis

ADDRESS: Post Office Box 112, University Station, Seattle, Wash.

DATE: December 22, 1938

SUBJECT: "The Flood at Port Angeles".

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT: Mrs. D. W. Morse,

4350 Pasadena Place,

Seattle, Washington

1. Ancestry: Irish

2. Place and date of birth: 78 years old.

3. Family: One son, two daughters

4. Places lived in; Port Angeles and Seattle.

5. Special interests: Local history of Washington

6. Community and religious activities: The Presbyterian Church.

7. Description of informant: Very tall, thin, alert, voluble.

THE FLOOD AT PORT ANGELES

"In 1861, the custom house for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho was established at Port Townsend. President Lincoln sent his personal friend, Victor Smith, as collector of customs. Smith sent reports to the President that he considered Port Angeles a better site for the custom house, as it was forty miles nearer the Straits, and had a

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remarkably deep harbor. The next year, 1862, the custom customs/# house was removed to Port Angeles.

“In 1863 a great flood, such as never happened before or since, swept away most of the houses of the town and demolished the custom customs/# house. No one could figure out what caused the flood, but the Indians said the rains had melted long-accumulated snows in the mountains, which gave way all at once and rushed down through the rivers and creeks and valleys, a great wall of rushing water.

“Afterward, when they dug up the debris of the custom customs/# house, they found a large Bible which had been used to take the oath by witnesses in law cases at the custom house.

“Here is the Bible. (She lifted the old volume from a near-by table). You see that though every page is mud-stained on the margin, not a single word of the text itself has been besmirched.”